DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 095 141 SP 008 319

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TITLE Modular Sequence: English as a Second Language, Methods and Techniques. TTP 001.13 Evaluating and Adapting Materials. Teacher Corps Bilingual Project.
INSTITUTION Hartford Univ., West Hartford, Conn. Coll. of Education.
NOTE 11p.; For related documents, see SP 008 306-318, 320, and 321

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS *English (Second Language); *Evaluation; *Instructional Materials; Performance Based Teacher Education; *Second Language Learning; Teacher Education; Textbook Content; *Textbook Evaluation; Textbook Selection
IDENTIFIERS *Learning Modules

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this unit of work is to provide the teacher participant with some useful guidelines for evaluating and adapting written materials for specific English as a second language (ESL) classes. There is pre- and post-assessment of specific learning tasks relevant to evaluating and adapting materials as well as learning activities, which are presented in outline form. Given this series of activities on evaluating and adapting written materials for ESL, the participant should be able to evaluate any portion of written material in terms of: (a) specific guidelines for relevance, (b) specific guidelines for content, and (c) specific guidelines for the achievement of teaching aims. Specific reading assignments are noted for various activities. (JA)

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MODULAR SEQUENCE:
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE
METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

TTP 001.13 EVALUATING AND ADAPTING MATERIALS

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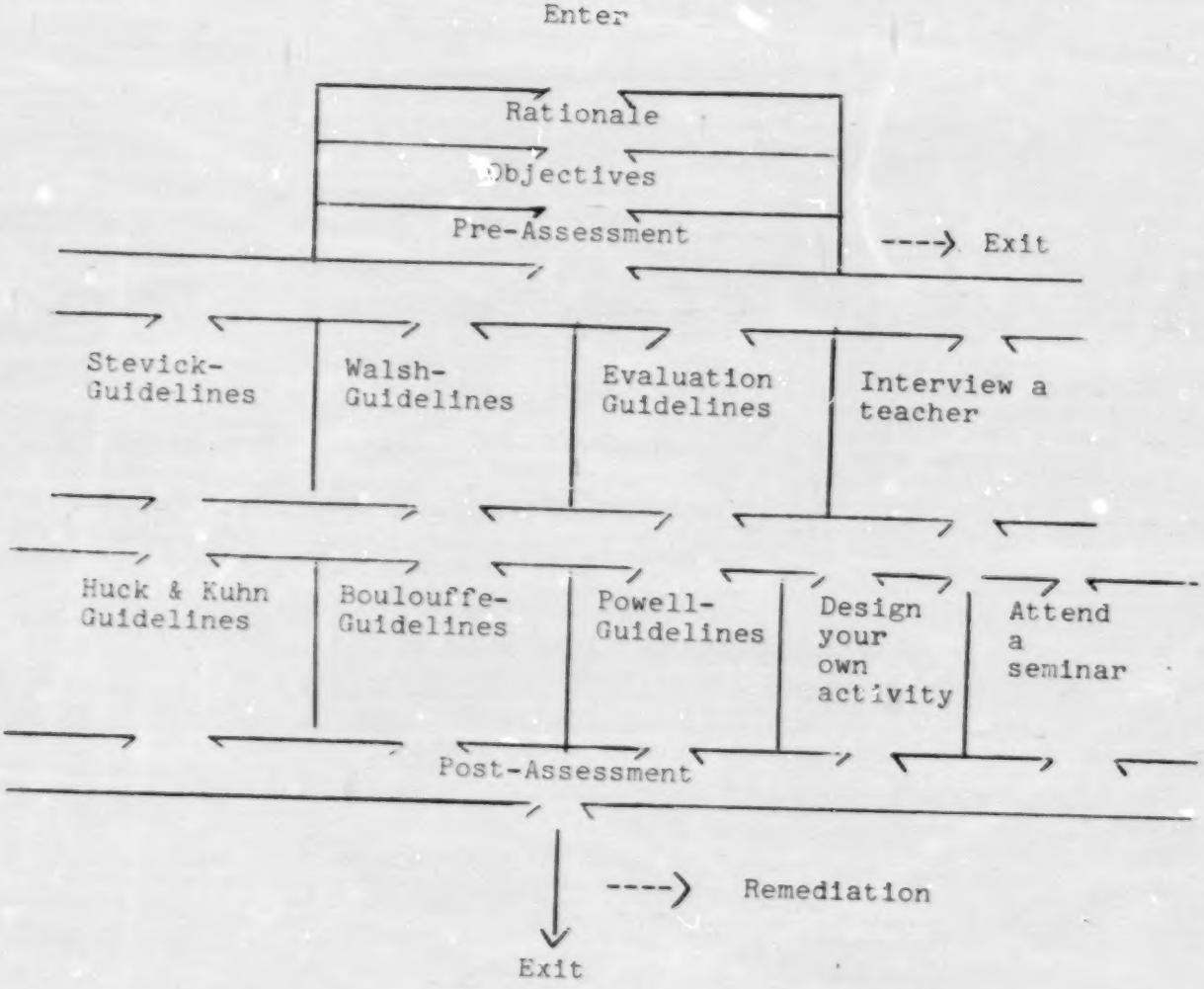
EVALUATING AND ADAPTING MATERIALS



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RATIONALE

In second-language teaching the textbook can be an asset or a liability, depending on the relevance of the textbook for a given group of students. An effective teacher knows that he/she will frequently have to adapt or supplement material in a textbook to aid the achievement of his/her classroom objectives.

This unit of work will provide the participant with some useful guidelines for evaluating and adapting written materials for specific ESL classes.

OBJECTIVES

Given a series of activities on evaluating and adapting written materials for ESL, the participant will be able to:

- -evaluate any portion of written material in terms of specific guidelines for relevance.
- -evaluate any portion of written material in terms of specific guidelines for content.
- -evaluate any portion of written material in terms of specific guidelines for the achievement of teaching aims.

PRE-ASSESSMENT

To assess your prior mastery of the terminal objectives of this unit of work, complete the following exercise. Your performance on this assessment will determine which learning tasks you are to perform.

Directions: Answer the following questions according to the directions noted in each:

I. Prepare an evaluation of written material based on specific guidelines for relevance.

II. Prepare an evaluation of written material based on specific guidelines for content.

III. Prepare an evaluation of written material based on specific guidelines for the achievement of teaching aims.

Learning Alternatives:

I. Select one of the following:

A. Read:

Earl W. Stevick, Adapting and Writing Language Lessons (Washington, D.C.: Foreign Service Institute, 1972), pp. 44-65.

Activities:

1. Evaluate one chapter of an ESL textbook in terms of strength/weakness, lightness/heaviness, and transparency/opacity. Base your evaluation on the needs of a specific group of Puerto Rican Spanish-speakers.

2. Prepare a socio-topical matrix that would be appropriate for a specific group of Puerto Rican Spanish-speakers. Consider the adequacy of the textbook you used for #1 in terms of your matrix.

3. How might you adapt Stevick's "occasions for use" for elementary school children?

B. Read:

Donald D. Walsh, "The Textbook: Aid or Hingrance to Modern Language Teaching," Modern Language Journal 42:2 (1958), 59-64.

Activity: Review Walsh's criteria for choosing a linguistically oriented textbook.

C. Evaluate one of the following types of textbooks in terms of promoting the achievement of teaching aims.

1. Structure

2. Reading

3. Writing

4. Multiple skills

Use of the following formats[1] for your evaluations.

1) Evaluation Guide for Structure Texts

Author, Title, Publishing Information

I. Method of presentation
   A. Introduction to lesson
   B. Explanation
   C. Focus
   D. Adequate drill
   E. Variety
   F. Progression from mechanical to meaningful drill
   G. Integrated review
   H. Ordering of structures
II. Supplementary materials
III. Text characteristics
IV. Intended audience
V. Type of program

2) Evaluation Guide for Reading Texts

Author, Title, Publishing Information

I. Teaching aims
   A. Mechanics of reading: letter, word, pronunciatio recognition; speed (adjusted to content); use of table of contents, bibliography, etc.
   B. Comprehension
   C. Content: literature, non-fiction; form: story, essay, conversation, poetry, etc.; cultural information; academic subject matter; cultural orientation.
II. Achievement of aims
   A. Type of exercises and adequacy
   B. Vocabulary and structure controls
III. Supplementary materials
IV. Text characteristics
V. Intended audience
VI. Type of program

3) Evaluation Guide for Composition Texts

Author, Title, Publishing Information

I. Teaching aims
   A. Handwriting
   B. Mechanics: spelling, capitalization, punctuation
   C. Vocabulary
   D. Structure
   E. Sentence improvement

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[1] Based on those used by Dr. Dale Myers, Teachers College, Columbia University, in TL3759, 1972.

F. Paragraph organization
G. Précis
H. Essay

II. Achievement of aims
A. Type and adequacy of drills
B. Structure and vocabulary controls
C. Relevance to student's life

III. Supplementary materials
IV. Test characteristics
V. Intended audience
VI. Type of program

4) Evaluation Guide for Multiple-Skills Texts

Author, Title, Publishing Information

I. The four skills
A. Pronunciation
B. Structures
C. Reading
D. Writing/composition

For each skill, refer to format for evaluation of structure texts under "Method of Presentation." Use relevant items (A-H); include those comments you feel most important. For example, A-D (Introduction, Explanation, Focus, Drills) are appropriate for pronunciation, but the text may include no "explanation," or your comments under "drills" may be so long as to preclude those under "focus." Note: very positive or negative comments should not be omitted.

II. Development, integration, review
III. Supplementary materials
IV. Text characteristics
V. Intended audience
VI. Type of program

D. Interview a teacher to determine ways to evaluate written material. Prepare an evaluation based on the teacher's suggestions.

II. Select one of the following:

A. Charlotte S. Huck and Doris Y. Kuhn, "Guides for Evaluating Children's Literature," Children's Literature in the Elementary School, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968), pp. 17-18

Activities:

1. Select a children's literature book and evaluate it in terms of Huck and Kuhn's content guidelines.

2. How might Huck and Kuhn's guidelines be adapted for greater relevance to reading in ESL programs?

B. Read:

Walter A. Powell, Selecting Reading Materials (Rockville, Md.: English Language Services, 1956).

Activity: Evaluate a reading sample according to Powell's criteria.

C. Read:

Jacqueline Boulouffe, "What to Overload and What to Overlook," English Language Teacher 15:3 (1961), 111-115.

Activity: Consider how you might adapt Boulouffe's points for use in ESL for primary grades.

D. Design your own learning activity.

E. Attend a seminar as scheduled by your module coordinator.

POST-ASSESSMENT

Directions: Answer the following questions according to the directions noted in each:

I. Prepare an evaluation of written material based on specific guidelines for relevance.

II. Prepare an evaluation of written material based on specific guidelines for content.

III. Prepare an evaluation of written material based on specific guidelines for the achievement of teaching aims.

Competency will be certified when your module coordinator has ascertained that the submitted post-assessment is of acceptable quality.

Remediation: Alternate learning activities are available on a contractual basis with the module coordinator.

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1. Boulouffe, Jacqueline, "What to Overload and What to Overlook," English Language Teacher 15:3, (1961).

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